

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04047 01 OF 02 071656Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----071721Z 100358 /41

P R 071516Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6550
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4047

EXDIS

BUCHAREST FOR VIETS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, IS, US, XF, OREP (STONE, RICHARD B.)
SUBJECT: CODEL STONE VISIT TO ISRAEL

BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL JUNE 2-5,
SENATOR STONE MET WITH A WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL LEADERS
WHO GAVE HIM AN UP-TO-DATE PICTURE OF THE POLITICAL
SITUATION. THE SENATOR'S ROLE WAS PRIMARILY THAT OF A
LISTENER BUT HE ALSO USED THE OPPORTUNITY TO REASSURE
HIS LISTENERS THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE
US WOULD REMAIN BASICALLY UNAFFECTED BY THE CHANGE OF
GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL. AS THE FIRST SENATORIAL VISITOR
AFTER THE MAY 17 ELECTION, HE RECEIVED WIDESPREAD MEDIA
COVERAGE IN WHICH THE SAME MESSAGE OF REASSURANCE
WAS PASSED TO THE ISRAELI PUBLIC. END SUMMARY
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1. DURING HIS FOUR DAYS IN ISRAEL SENATOR STONE MET
WITH THE THREE LEADING MINISTERS OF THE OUTGOING
GOVERNMENT--RABIN, PERES AND ALLON--AND WITH THE
INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL BE THE MOST PROMINENT MEMBERS
OF THE INCOMING GOVERNMENT. HE HAD TWO MEETINGS
WITH MENAHEM BEGIN, HAD LUNCH TWICE WITH EZER

WEIZMAN, AND MET SEPARATELY WITH ARIK SHARON, SIMCHA ERHLICH, MOSHE DAYAN, YIGAL YADIN AND GOLDA MEIR. HE ALSO VISITED THE KFIR PRODUCTION LINE AT IAI AND THE PRODUCTION LINE FOR THE NEW ISRAELI TANK AT THE IDF ARMOUR WORKSHOP AND HAD SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH THE CHIEF OF STAFF AND THE DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE.

2. IN HIS MEETINGS WITH RABIN, PERES AND ALLON, THE SENATOR FOUND THE THREE MINISTERS PREPARING FOR THE TRANSITION OF POWER TO THE NEW LIKUD GOVERNMENT. ALL THREE MENTIONED, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE ROLE THEY BELIEVED THE US PLAYED IN THE LABOR PARTY DEFEAT, ALTHOUGH NONE OF THEM ACCUSED US OF HAVING BEEN PRIMARILY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR DOWNFALL. THEY WERE RESIGNED TO WHAT HAS HAPPENED AND ARE AGREED THAT THE LABOR PARTY MUST TRY TO RECOVER IN THE JUNE 21 HISTADRUT ELECTIONS AND, OVER A LONGER PERIOD OF TIME, REPAIR ITS STRUCTURE AND REBUILD ITS FUTURE. ALLON WAS SOMEWHAT PHILOSOPHICAL, RABIN WAS IN GOOD SPIRITS AND SHARP IN HIS ANALYTICAL COMMENTS, WHILE PERES WAS SOMEWHAT DESPONDENT AND LESS ELOQUENT THAN WE HAVE SEEN ON OCCASION (SEE SEPTELS)M

3. BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT WITH SENATOR STONE, AMBASSADOR WAS PRESENT FOR ONLY THE FIRST FIFTEEN MINUTES OF SENATOR STONE'S FIRST TWO-HOUR MEETING WITH BEGIN AND DID NOT ATTEND THE SECOND 45 MINUTE MEETING. THE CONFIDENTIAL

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SENATOR SAID LATER HE HAD FOUND BEGIN FULL OF CONFIDENCE AND CONVICTION, BUT THAT HE LEFT SOMEWHAT ENCOURAGED ABOUT US ABILITY TO DO BUSINESS WITH HIM. WEIZMAN MADE THE POINT DURING HIS FIRST MEETING (NO EMBASSY OFFICER WAS PRESENT DURING THE SECOND CONVERSATION) THAT U.S. POSITIONS REGARDING THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES HAVE BEEN BASED ON TEN YEARS OF MISSTATEMENTS BY THE ALIGNMENT AND IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR THE LIKUD TO EXPLAIN THE REALITIES OF THE SITUATION ON THE WEST BANK IN ORDER TO GAIN US UNDERSTANDING. WEIZMAN, ALSO AS USUAL, WAS EXUBERANTLY CONFIDENT THAT THE LIKUD GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO BRING ABOUT A SHARP IMPROVEMENT IN ISRAEL'S INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL POSITION.

4. A BREAKFAST MEETING WITH GENERAL ARIK SHARON WAS AN INTERESTING OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR FROM AN INDIVIDUAL WHO WILL PROBABLY HAVE AN IMPORTANT POSITION IN BEGIN'S GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS

NOT AS A MINISTER. (HE IS NOT LIKELY TO BE PART OF THE INNER CORE GROUP ON FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES.) SHARON'S DEFINITION OF THE PEACE WHICH MUST BE OBTAINED FROM NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ARABS IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF HIS COLLEAGUES: HE SPEAKS OF A "CONTRACTUAL" PEACE NOW, ONE WHICH IS CAREFULLY AND PRECISELY DESCRIBED BY A TREATY, AND A FULL PEACE LATER. THIS FULL PEACE WILL COME ABOUT GRADUALLY AND NATURALLY AS ISRAEL AND THE ARABS FULFILL THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACTUAL PEACE. SHARON WOULD DEFINE FULL PEACE AS THE SITUATION WHICH WILL EXIST WHEN NEITHER SIDE HAS AN EXPECTATION THAT WAR WILL BREAK OUT.

5. SHARON ALSO DISCUSSED THE MORE IMMEDIATE PROBLEMS FACING ISRAEL. IN THE NORTH, THERE IS THE GEOGRAPHICAL PROBLEM POSED BY THE NARROW
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RANGE OF HILLS IN THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE NECESSITY TO RETAIN CONTROL OF THOSE HILLS, THE PROBLEM OF LEBANON AND THE SYRIAN TAKEOVER THERE, AND THE PROBLEM OF WATER AND ISRAEL'S UNRESTRICTED ACCESS TO IT. (SHARON STRESSED THAT ONE THIRD OF ISRAEL'S WATER SUPPLY COMES FROM SOURCES

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----071819Z 100841 /42

P R 071516Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6551
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4047

EXDIS
COULD BE
DIVERTED.) THERE ARE ALSO OTHER PROBLEMS OF THE
WEST BANK--THE PROXIMITY TO ISRAEL'S CENTERS OF
POPULATION BY ANY FORCE IN THE WEST BANK, THE
POSSIBILITY OF REVERSION TO TERRORISM IF THE
WEST BANK IS NOT UNDER ISRAELI CONTROL, AND
THE NECESSITY OF ESTABLISHING ISRAELI SETTLE-
MENTS IN AREAS WHICH ARE IMPORTANT FOR SECURITY
PURPOSES. IN SPITE OF THE PROBLEMS FACING
ISRAEL, SHARON SAID HE IS CONVINCED THAT ISRAEL
CAN LIVE IN PEACE WITH THE ARABS AND THAT IT HAS
BEEN ISRAEL'S INTENT TO DO SO SINCE SETTLERS
BEGAN TO ARRIVE IN THE 1920'S.

6. IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH THE SENATOR, EHRLICH
CONFIRMED THE DISAPPOINTMENT HE HAD FELT WHEN
BEGIN MADE HIS DECISION TO APPOINT DAYAN WITHOUT
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER LIKUD LEADERS. HE ALSO
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NOTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT LIKUD MEMBERS MIGHT
VOTE IN THE CABINET AND IN THE KNESSET ACCORDING
TO THEIR INDIVIDUAL CONSCIENCE AND NOT ACCORDING
TO COALITION AGREEMENTS. GOLDA WAS AS SHARP AS
WE HAVE SEEN HER IN MANY MONTHS AND SAID THAT,
WHILE SHE WOULD NOT HID HER DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE
ELECTION RESULTS, THE UNITED STATES MUST UNDER-
STAND THAT NO ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL ACCEPT A
RETURN TO THE 1967 BORDERS OR THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A THIRD STATE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN. SHE
HOPED CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE US AND ISRAEL
COULD HELP TO AVOID PROBLEMS BECAUSE, IN HER
OPINION, A CONFRONTATION WITH THE US WOULD BE
A CRISIS FOR ISRAEL SECOND ONLY TO THE TRAGEDY OF
ANOTHER WAR. (SEE SEPTELS FOR REPORTS OF THE
MEETINGS WITH DAYAN AND YADIN.)

7. IN A PRIVATE LUNCH AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE
VISIT, SENIOR MFA ADVISOR EVRON SUMMED UP THE
VISIT AND TOUCHED ON MANY OF THE SAME THEMES.
HE NOTED THAT THE SENATOR WAS LEAVING ISRAEL ON
THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BEGINNING OF THE
SIX DAY WAR AND SAID THAT DURING THOSE TEN YEARS
ISRAELIS HAVE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO SOMETHING

APPROACHING NORMALCY IN THE REDUCTION OF TERRORIST INCIDENTS BECAUSE OF ISRAEL'S CONTROL OF THE WEST BANK. REGARDLESS OF THEIR VIEW ABOUT THE HISTORIC AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS OF ISRAEL TO THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, ISRAELIS CANNOT ACCEPT A RETURN TO A SITUATION IN WHICH THEIR LIVES WOULD BE THREATENED BY THE PROXIMITY OF TERRORISTS AND THEIR ABILITY TO OPERATE AGAINST ISRAEL. HE ALSO POINTED OUT THE CLOSE TIES AND LONG ACQUAINTANESHIPS WHICH EXIST AMONG ALL ISRAELI LEADERS, REGARDLESS OF PARTY , AND SAID THAT THIS COMMON BACKGROUND WILL TEND TO BRING CONTINUITY TO THE POLICES OF A NEW CONFIDENTIAL

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GOVERNMENT.IN HIS PERSONAL VIEW, THE LIKUD SUCCESS OF MAY 17 WAS NOT AN ISOLATED EVENT BUT WAS ONLY THE MOST DRAMATIC AND OPENING STEP IN WHAT HE ANTICIPATES WILL BE A LONGER PERIOD OF DECLINE FOR THE LABOR PARTY.

8. THE VISIT WAS GIVEN PROMINENT MEDIA COVERAGE; THERE WERE TV AND RADIO REPORTERS WAITING FOR THE SENATOR AS HE EMERGED FROM EACH MEETING WITH ISRAELI LEADERS.THE GENERAL TONE OF HIS REMARKS TO HIS INTERVIEWERS WAS ONE OF REASSURANCE AND HE CHARACTERIZED BEGIN AS A "PATRIOT" AND A REASONABLE MAN; HE ALSO EMPHASIZED THE DIGNITY AND GRACE WITH WHICH THE GOVERNMENTAL TRANSITION WAS BEING CARRIED OUT.

9.SENATOR STONE'S VISIT WAS WELL-TIMED TO GIVE HIM AND US A BRIDS' EYE VIEW OF THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPEHIS GRACEFUL OPTIMISTIC PUBLIC STYLE HELPED AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT TO DAMPEN SOME OF THE JOURNALISTIC HYSTERIA HERE ABOUT PRESIDENT CARTER'S ALLEGEDLY MALEVOLENT INTENTIONS TOWARD ISRAEL.IN PRIVATE, HE LABORED MANFULLY TO GET ACROSS TO THE LIKUD AND DMC LEADERS THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM THEY COULD FACE IF BEGIN'S INITIAL PUBLIC FOREIGN POLICY STANCE DID NOT BECOME MORE FLEXIBLE AFTER HIS COALITION IS FORMED.HE LEFT ISRAEL MUCH LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS SOUNDED,BUT STILL RATHER ENCOURAGED ON THE WHOLE,ESPECIALLY ABOUT BEGIN HIMSELF.

10. DESPITE THE MANY MINEFIELDS WHICH HE HAD TO TRAVERSE, SENATOR STONE DISPLAYED GOOD DIPLOMATIC FOOTWORK AND AVOIDED ANY MISSTEP. HIS VISIT WAS A RAL CONTRIBUTION TO U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS AT THIS DELICATE MOMENT.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL LEADERS, POLITICAL SITUATION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TELAV04047
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770202-1002
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770681/aaaactbu.tel
Line Count: 285
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9a1b3a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Feb-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2241728
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CODEL STONE VISIT TO ISRAEL BEGIN SUMMARY: DURING HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL JUNE 2-5, SENATOR STONE MET WITH A WIDE RANGE OF POLITICAL L
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, PINT, OREP, IS, US, XF, (STONE, RICHARD B)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9a1b3a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009